
FY 2019
SMALL NEPA PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

Please **do not leave any field BLANK**, unless it does not apply.
Submit form (Word doc) electronically to jjchynoweth@fs.fed.us by **November 7, 2018**.

(NOTE: Italicized / red comments are for reference only. You may delete them when completing form.)

Project Name	North Fork Ponderosa Pine Restoration
District Name (or "Forestwide")	North Fork District
County where project located?	Clearwater
FS Personnel Name, Phone Number and Email <i>If a partnership, please add name, phone and email; however, an FS employee MUST BE the project proponent and point of contact.</i>	Mike Pruss, Wildlife Program Manager, 208-935-4256, mpruss@usda.gov
Legal Location <i>Township(s), Range(s), and Section(s) of project.</i>	T41N R10E S 34,35,36; T41N R11E S 30,31,32; T40N R11E S 5,6; T40N R10E S 1,2,3,PB37,8, PB40,PB41,16,17,20,21,28,29,30,32,PB46; T39N R10E S 5,8,PB37,PB38,PB39; T40N R9E S PB48; T39N R9E S 1,2,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16, 19,20,21,22,28,29,30,31,32; T39N R8E S PB48; T38N R9E S 6; T38N R8E S PB37,PB38,PB39, PB41,PB42,PB43,PB44,8,9,11,12,16,17; T38N R7E S 1,2,11,12,13; T39N R7E S 11,14,15,22,23, 25,26,27,35, and 36.
District Ranger / Line Officer's Name <i>Person(s) responsible for signing the decision document</i>	Andrew Skowlund
Is the project associated with meeting a Forest target?	Yes, project would contribute to approximately 20% of the annual fuels target for the forest, and approximately 25% of the annual terrestrial wildlife habitat target for the forest.
Which CE Category does this project fit? <i>Provide citation: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(x)</i> <i>See below regarding 220.6(d) projects.</i>	36 CFR 220.6(e)6

A Project Record or written Decision are not required for projects using 36 CFR 220.6 (d) categories.

If a 36 CFR 220.6 (d) project, does the Decision Maker want it to go through the Small NEPA process?

Yes No

*If no, this form **does not** need to be filled out nor submitted to the Small NEPA planner.*

If yes, provide the category below, complete the remainder of this form and have Decision Maker submit it to the Small NEPA planner.

CE Category: 36 CFR 220.6 (d)()

At what level does the Decision Maker want the project scoped?

Internal X External*

Internal scoping will be through the Small NEPA IDT, unless otherwise specified. Scoping would be documented in the Extraordinary Circumstances Checklist.

*External scoping will be with the public via a scoping letter, a legal notice, and the scoping letter posted on the NPCWNF website. Postcards with a link to the website/scoping letter will be used for larger mailings. The Project will only be scoped to the Tribe(s) et al (see * below), unless otherwise specified.*

**For external scoping, please to complete block below. Note: please enter "NA" if left empty on purpose*

Provide a list of the individuals, groups, agencies, etc. *, with their mailing address and/or email address, who will be included for external Scoping. DO NOT provide only a name.

** The Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene Tribes will routinely be scoped. The following will also be included on all SN scoping/ mailing lists: Friends of the Clearwater, Idaho Conservation League, Thomas E. Peterson and Bill Mulligan.*

What Level of Analysis (below) does the Decision Maker want for the Project?

 X **Low level:** If the project's level of public scrutiny is projected to be relatively low or unknown, the line officer chooses who we would contact for scoping (limited). In this case specialists would only do the checklist for each project. Documentation for low level analysis projects would be a completed checklist filled out by the specialists, including the name of the specialist who performed the analysis, the project name, and date it was completed. No other written documentation would be generated.

 Moderate level: If the project's level of public scrutiny is projected to be relatively moderate to high, then the line officer chooses who we would contact for scoping (a little broader). In this case, specialists would complete the checklist with the only write up being for items that are present and the rationale for the effects call. No write up would be given for items in the checklist that are not present. If the determination is no effect (which generally speaking, most CE's should have zero to very little adverse effects), then document why that determination was made in one paragraph or less. If the determination is an adverse effect, then why that determination was made would be written in less three paragraphs.

List the Management Area(s) in which your project is located.

A3, C3, C4, C8S, E1, E3

What are the desired conditions (*relevant to your project*) for the Management Area(s) listed above?

A3: "Manage optimum wildlife (primarily elk) habitat within limits necessary to meet visual management standards and to maintain a semi-primitive setting."

C3: "Improve browse habitat when shrub height exceeds 7 feet, when high brush decadency is present, or when forage production is declining, considering site capabilities and cost-effectiveness." "Remove trees and replace with browse species where needed to meet forage objectives." "Treat activity fuel to break up continuous fuel beds, to remove barriers of big-game movement, and to improve forage." "Use prescribed fires from planned and unplanned ignitions as needed to achieve Forest Plan direction."

C4: "Maintain a minimum of 25 percent of the area in stands of trees of adequate size for thermal cover distributed through and adjacent to forage areas." "Use prescribed fires from planned and unplanned ignitions as needed to achieve Forest Plan direction."

C8S: "Maintain or enhance moose habitat as indicated by project or area analysis." "Manage big-game summer range for a minimum of 75 percent of elk habitat potential." "Treat logging and thinning slash to prepare sites for reforestation, to break up continuous fuel beds, to remove barriers to big-game movements, and to improve forage." "Use prescribed fires from planned and unplanned ignitions as needed to achieve Forest Plan direction."

E1: "When habitat conditions [for elk] warrant, managers are urged to exceed the 25 percent habitat standard." "Use prescribed fires from planned ignitions to treat activity and natural fuel loadings."

E3: "Use prescribed fires from planned ignitions to treat activity and natural fuel loadings."

The desired conditions within the treatment areas include: Mature conifer over-story with a Ponderosa Pine dominated canopy, capable of supporting now and/or in the future, ponderosa pine dependent sensitive wildlife species such as flammulated owls and pygmy nuthatches. Reduced ladder fuels composed of encroaching mid-seral conifer species, increasing resiliency of ponderosa pine stands to future wildfires, and capable of supporting future prescribed fires. Reduced mature shrub component, with re-sprouting young shrubs and a seed bed capable of supporting shrub, forb and grass seedlings, increasing plant species diversity and forage availability for big game species.

Desired conditions are described in Chapters 2 & 3 of the Nez Perce and Clearwater Forest Plans.

Is the project in an Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA)? Yes* No

If yes, which one(s)? Pot Mountain and Mallard-Larkins

** If yes, fill in the 'Project in Roadless Area' table below, AND complete a Briefing Paper - note map requirements. Provide the completed Briefing Paper to the Environmental Coordinator and Brian Riggers prior to scoping.*

Is the project in a congressionally designated area, ex. Wilderness Area, Wild & Scenic River Corridor, Research Natural Area, Historic Trail, etc.? Yes* No

If yes, which one(s)?

** If yes, contact Carol Hennessey, cahennessey@fs.fed.us, 935-4270, BEFORE submitting this proposal, to discuss how the project may affect the designated area.*

Are there Floodplains or Wetlands in the project area? Yes **No**

The project area borders the North Fork of the Clearwater River floodplain. No cutting or ignition will be conducted within the floodplain. There are no known wetlands within the project area.

Are there Municipal Watersheds in the project area? Yes **No**

If yes, which one?

Is the project located in an RHCA? **Yes** No

Describe the existing condition of the project area.

Project area consists of a mosaic of mature to over-mature shrub fields intersected by mid-seral mixed conifer stringers in RHCA's with periodic stands of mature ponderosa pine and larch with encroaching mid-seral mixed conifers. The ponderosa pine/larch stands exist on steep slopes of dry south and west facing ridges at the lower elevations. The encroaching mixed conifers are comprised of grand fir and Douglas fir, and currently serve as ladder fuels threatening the long-term persistence of the dominant over-story. The existing condition is a result of stand-replacing wildfires in the early 20th century followed by an extended period of fire suppression. The majority of the project area is in elk winter range, however the decadent brush fields do not currently supply quality forage for wintering elk or moose.

What is the Purpose and Need for the proposed action*?

A unique terrestrial wildlife assemblage is dependent upon mature ponderosa pine habitat, including Region 1 Sensitive Species such as Flammulated owls and Pygmy nuthatches. Ponderosa pine stands are uncommon in the upper North Fork drainage. Because the project area is along the North Fork of the Clearwater River, it experiences high summer recreational use, and is therefore susceptible to human-caused wildfires. This project will reduce ladder fuels in ponderosa pine-dominated stands, increasing their resiliency to wildfire, and allowing the stands to be maintained using periodic prescribed fire over the long term. Maintaining and treating ponderosa pine and larch stands will also maintain and increase the plant diversity in the project area.

This project is within the Lolo Elk Management Zone, an area that historically provided habitat for one of the largest elk herds in North America. Elk habitat and elk populations have declined dramatically in the Lolo Zone in the past decade, partially due to declining habitat quality. Early seral habitats maintained and created by prescribed fire will provide needed wintering areas for elk, moose and deer. Re-setting the growth on the mature brush is needed to provide improved forage quantity and quality for big game, especially in critical winter habitats.

Benefits of this project include but are not limited to: improving sensitive species habitat, improved big game winter range, protecting and promoting long lived fire resistant species such as Ponderosa Pine and Western Larch, diversifying habitat types and vegetation cover, promoting early seral vegetation, and creating a mosaic pattern across the landscape which can reduce the potential for large catastrophic wildfires by limiting their size and severity.

** The purpose and need describes: Why is the action being proposed at this location at this time (what is the problem, the need for the action?)? And what is the desired goal/outcome (the purpose) of the action?*

Describe the Proposed Action.

What is provided will be used in the Scoping Letter (*external only*), by the resource specialists for their effects analyses, and in the Decision document.

There are 38 proposed treatment units with 2185 acres of total treatment. Ninety-six (96) acres in parts of 8 units are proposed for non-commercial thinning or slashing, either by contracted labor or by FS staff using chainsaws and other hand tools. No motorized timber equipment will be used for thinning. Piles, composed of thinned and slashed material, may be hand-piled and hand-ignited. Prescribed burning (2185 acres/38 units) will be conducted by FS staff following a prescribed burn plan. Typical ignition techniques include drip torches, fusies, hand-held launchers, and helicopter ignition with spherical dispensers. Units may be re-treated, as necessary, to achieve objectives and for maintenance of habitat once objectives are met.

Thirty-two (32) of the treatment units are located in roadless areas and thirty-six (36) of the units are within big game winter range. Regional Forester concurrence, if necessary, for cutting in roadless and any clearances as identified in the burn plan will be procured prior to implementation of those components.

The project boundary includes RHCA's. No cutting or piling and burning will be done in RHCA's. No prescribed fire ignitions will be done in the RHCA's. Prescribed fire will be allowed to back naturally into RHCA's, if they are within a prescribed burn unit. Recent prescribed burns in this area resulted in limited backing into RHCA's, with the fire backing into RHCA's typically going out due to high moisture fuels, high relative humidity, and shaded fuels prior to or shortly after entering RHCA's.

Below is a Table of the proposed treatment units with acres, treatment type, and estimated seasonal timeframe for treatment. Each burn unit will be evaluated by the Burn Boss and the burn implemented during a time when the unit is in prescription and will meet the purpose and need of the project. See maps of the project area and the proposed treatment units along the North Fork of the Clearwater River.

Unit	Acres	Treatment Type	Estimated Season
1	146	Burn	Spring/fall
2	99	Burn	Spring/fall
3	42	Burn	Spring
4	60	Burn	Spring
5	95	Burn	Spring/fall
6	108	Burn	Spring/fall
7	84	Burn	Spring/fall
8	23	Burn	Spring
9	58	Burn	Spring
10	34	Burn	Spring
11	87	Burn	Spring
12	74	Burn/Piles: ~4 acres of piles and possible hand line around outfitter camp	Spring
13	58	Burn	Spring
14	65	Burn	Spring
15	162	Burn	Spring
16	147	Burn	Spring
17	48	Burn	Spring
Unit	Acres	Treatment Type	Estimated Season
18	96	Burn	Spring
19	55	Burn	Spring
20	42	Burn/Slash or Piles ~16 acres of piles or possible slashing for	Spring

List the Design Criteria / Mitigation Measures * to be included with the Proposed Action.

Mitigation Measures:

- No roads or landings will be constructed.
- Burning will be conducted in accordance with the Prescribed Burn Plan.
- A silvicultural prescription will be written and followed.
- Use of motorized equipment (such as All-Terrain Vehicles), other than hand held equipment such as power saws, will not be permitted off designated roads in the project areas. (FSH 2509.25 – WATERSHED CONSERVATION PRACTICES HANDBOOK, CHAPTER 10, 12.4- Management Measure (6) 1.a.)
- Maintain healthy desirable vegetation that is resistant to noxious weed establishment. (FSM 2000 – NATIONAL FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, 2080-NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT, 2081.2 – Prevention and Control Measures, 5.b.(2))

** Additional Design Criteria/Measures can be listed under “Additional Information” on the last page of this form*

Small NEPA IDT/resource specialists are listed below. Contact them if you have any questions regarding their resource for your project.

Botany – Mike Hays, mhays01@fs.fed.us; 983-4028

Fisheries – Derrick Bawdon, dbawdon@fs.fed.us;

Heritage – Steve Lucas, slucas@fs.fed.us; 983-4040

Hydrology – Cynthia Valle, cvalle@fs.fed.us; 963-4203

Minerals – Marty Jones, martinjones@fs.fed.us; 983-5158

Recreation – Carol Hennessey, cahennessey@fs.fed.us; 935-4270

Soils – Robert Bergstrom, robertbergstrom@fs.fed.us; 963-4287

Wild and Scenic River – Chris Noyes, chnoyes@fs.fed.us; 935-4251

Wildlife – Jim Lutes, jamesrlutes@fs.fed.us; 963-4202

PROJECT MAPS

Please send – separate from this form and per the instructions outlined below – a GIS-generated map or maps of the project area (pdf format only) with the project submission email.

- Make sure that the map layers can be turned on / off / are editable.
- Make sure the map(s) fits on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.

Provide at least one map, preferably “portrait” orientation, with the project area / features as:

- a Point, e.g. culvert, bridge, etc.,
- a Line, e.g. fence, road, creek, etc., and/or
- a Polygon, e.g. stand boundaries, treatment areas, etc.
 - Do not use a point if treating an area, use a polygon.
 - Points/lines/polygons need to be distinct and easily found on the map.
 - The project area / site needs to be centered on the map, especially if only one area/feature.

Please use the Forest Visitor Map as your map’s base layer.

- Do not add contour lines to the FV map unless needed for clarifying the proposed action. Contour lines can make the map difficult to read.
 - If contour lines are needed, make sure they are distinguishable from other linear features such as roads, trails, streams, etc.
- A topo map can be substituted for the FV map. If using a topo map but the contour lines are not important the topo lines should be light gray or opaque.
- Regardless of base map, make sure there are identifiable elements, e.g. towns, roads, streams, etc. on the map to help locate the project area on the landscape and that the elements are clearly labeled.

The preferred map scale (typically 1:24K) is whatever scale best presents the project area’s location and proposed activities:

- If the 1:24K scale is too small (i.e. the project feature(s) – point/line/polygon – would be hard to find or would be indistinguishable on just one map), use a larger scale to show the overall project area (coarse scale map) and smaller scaled maps to show the project features (fine scale map).
- If the 1:24K scale is too big (i.e. the project feature is a tiny point or thin line lost/hard to find on the larger landscape), use a smaller scale to highlight the feature while ensuring there are elements on the map to identify the project’s location.
- If you need to make additional maps, please make as few as possible.

At a minimum, all maps should include (with the preferred but not set in stone location on the map):

- a Title (project name and district name only (please); centered at top)
- a Legend (features clearly labeled; lower right corner)
- a Scale (in half mile, e.g. 0__0.25__0.5 miles, or full miles, e.g. 0__0.25__0.5__1.0 miles; lower left corner)
- a North Arrow (upper right corner)
 - Display all of the above in boxes with black outlines and a white backgrounds (not gray or yellow)
 - Do not ‘Halo’ the text or numbers or anything else on the map. Please.
 - The Scale needs to be large enough to read the numbers.

Finally, please include the mapmakers name and the date it was created on the map.

The Map(s) you provide will be used for Scoping the Public and the Tribes and in the Decision document. Please make sure they show – clearly, effectively, and professionally – what activity or activities are being proposed and where they are located on the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests.

SHAPEFILES

The resource specialists require the shapefile(s) of the project's proposed activities before they will conduct their analyses. Providing the shapefile does not substitute for providing a pdf map.

The Project Proponent needs to send the shapefile, or a location where the shapefile can be found, to the Small NEPA Planner (currently: jjchynoweth@fs.fed.us) by the time or shortly after the District Ranger submits this form.

- Shapefiles need to include the Project Name and have the Feature (culvert, bridge, etc.) labeled.
- Shapefiles need to include the following extensions – .dbf, .prj, .sbn, .shp, .shx, and .xml.

PROPONENT: When submitting the shapefile(s) you must include in the email how the location(s) of the project feature(s), i.e. line, point, and/or polygon, were determined (see below):

- Field-collected GPS data;
- From existing corporate GIS data (provide name of GIS layer);
- Created (digitized) from an aerial photo;
- Created (digitized) from the existing corporate GIS data;
- Created (digitized) from the NPCLW Visitor Map;
- Other (describe).

Projects in Roadless Area

<p>What is the Inventoried Roadless Area name? Pot Mountain Mallard-Larkins</p> <p><i>O:\NFS\NezPerceClearwater\Project\MultiBasin\Planning\Small_NEPA_Cat_Ex\Reference Material\Roadless Rule Info</i></p>	<p><u>Forest Plan IRA Name (if different):</u></p>
<p>Identify the Idaho Roadless Management Classification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wild Land Recreation</i> • <i>Special Areas of Historic or Tribal Significance</i> • <i>Primitive</i> • <i>Backcountry Restoration</i> • <i>General Forest, Rangeland and Grassland</i> 	<p>Classification(s):</p> <p>Pot Mountain - Backcountry Restoration – 24 prescribed burn units and 4 brush/pile/ burn units.</p> <p>Pot Mountain - Forest Plan Special Area – within project boundary, but not over-lapping with any treatment units.</p> <p>Mallard-Larkins – Backcountry Restoration – 7 prescribed burn units and 0 brush/pile/ burn units.</p>
<p>Does the project involve constructing or reconstructing roads? Yes* No</p> <p>* If yes, see http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2 then navigate to Subpart C 294.23</p>	

Does the project involve cutting trees? **Yes*** No

** If yes, see <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2> then navigate to Subpart C 294.24*

Project involves cutting non-commercial trees using slashing/piling/burning treatments to improve habitat for flammulated owls and pygmy nuthatches, both Sensitive Species §294.24(c)(1)(iii) and to maintain and restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure and processes of the Ponderosa Pine stands within the project area §294.24(c)(1)(iv). The treatment will allow for the retention of a diversity of plant and animal communities §294.23(3) and habitat for sensitive species §294.23(4) over the long-term §294.24(c)(2)(i), maximizes the retention of large Ponderosa Pine trees as appropriate for that forest type, promoting fire resilient stands §294.24(c)(2)(ii); and maintains consistency with land management plan components as provided for in §294.28(d).

Does the project involve removing minerals, including common variety minerals? Yes* **No**

** If yes, see <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2> then navigate to Subpart C 294.25*

JC : 10/15/2018

Additional Information:

The tree cutting activity component of the proposed action may fall under the following stipulation:

- Subpart C §294.24(c)(2) Any action authorized pursuant to paragraphs § 294.24(c)(1)(ii) through (v) shall be approved by the Regional Forester and limited to situations that, in the Regional Forester's judgment: (i) Maintains or improves one or more of the roadless characteristics over the long-term; (ii) Maximizes the retention of large trees as appropriate for the forest type to the extent the trees promote fire-resilient stands; and (iii) Is consistent with land management plan components as provided for in § 294.28(d).